

Inspection of T Plus Centre (Taliesin Education)

Loveny House, Miller Business Park, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 4DA

Inspection dates: 16–18 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an improving little school. Those in charge take great care to make sure that every pupil feels happy and safe. The head of centre and other leaders, including the proprietor, have established a caring school where the pupils want to be. Staff know every pupil exceptionally well. The positive relationships between adults and pupils are based on mutual respect, goodwill and humour. As a result, pupils behave well. There is no bullying. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. When this does happen, leaders and staff deal with it swiftly and sensitively. Leaders and staff are dedicated to ensuring that they build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They aim to give pupils the 'tools' to be successful as well as another vital chance in education.

However, the quality of education is not yet good. There is too much difference between how well pupils do in different subjects. Leaders have not given enough thought to what they want pupils to learn in the primary age range. Pupils are not consistently well taught so are not catching up quickly enough.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The proprietor and head of centre's vision is at the heart of the school's work. They are determined to make a difference to the lives of the pupils who attend the school. Following the previous inspection, leaders have worked diligently so that all independent school standards are now met. However, they recognise that there is more still to do to make this a good school.

Leaders think carefully about what they would like each pupil to learn. They work hard to make sure that work placements, courses and qualifications are right for every pupil. The school has a proven track record in securing positive next steps for pupils when they leave the school. The range of activities is successful in enthusing pupils and re-engaging them with their education. The best examples are seen in the high-quality outdoor education and personal, social, health and education (PSHE) activities. In these subjects, leaders make sure that activities build pupils' knowledge and skills steadily over time. Pupils learn how to take responsibility for themselves and lead others. Pupils rely on each other and quickly build strong relationships through teamwork and cooperation. Staff ensure that learning is ambitious. As a result, pupils are keen and enjoy these subjects. In PSHE, pupils successfully explore their thoughts and feelings to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance, including those of different faith, race, sexuality and colour. Pupils told us, 'Everyone is as important as everyone else!'

The introduction of 'enrichment afternoons' means that pupils get to try a range of subjects. These include art, design and technology as well as science. Pupils enjoy these activities and produce some high-quality work. Pupils with particular personal interests, such as in music or learning a trade, have additional opportunities off-site. Pupils look forward to these. They help pupils to gain a greater insight and

knowledge to prepare them for their next steps when they leave the school. Leaders ensure that the pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are fully considered so that pupils work towards their targets.

Nevertheless, there are too many other weaknesses that hold pupils back. The head of centre and proprietor have not made their expectations clear enough in the primary curriculum. Similarly, some leaders do not have a clear enough idea of what they want, or need, to do to improve their subjects. Consequently, plans for teaching subjects such as history and geography are not well considered. When these are implemented, pupils do not learn about these subjects in an orderly and well-prescribed way. This hinders their ability to use knowledge again at other times.

In addition, leaders have not made sure that the reading and phonics programme is as effective as it needs to be. The new English leader is taking steps to ensure that all pupils are reading a book. He has improved the reading areas to make these more enticing. Teachers hear pupils read and provide some help for pupils with this. However, pupils often arrive with significant gaps in their reading abilities and the school's ways of checking and helping them to catch up are not good enough. Books are not well matched to pupils' knowledge. Furthermore, reading is not put at the heart of what the pupils need to learn or know to help them progress beyond the school. Staff are not yet doing as much as they can to get pupils reading.

Since the previous standard inspection, the proprietor has worked with external partners to improve the school. She has followed the advice of Cornwall local authority to take action in meeting the independent school standards. This external scrutiny has worked well in holding school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make safeguarding a priority. Everything, from staff update meetings to robust individual risk assessments for pupils, helps to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained, diligent and aware. Leaders work effectively with a range of other agencies to get pupils any help they need. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and looked after.

Staff know every pupil well. Staffing ratios are high to ensure that adults are available to provide ongoing guidance throughout the day. Strong staff-pupil relationships cater well for pupils' personal, social and mental health needs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- There are too many weaknesses in the way that the school teaches and promotes reading. This means that the pupils, many of whom join the school already behind, are not supported well enough to catch up. This holds them back.

Leaders need to evaluate the school's reading strategy and take the necessary steps to improve this aspect of the school's work.

- The school does not have an agreed or robust phonics programme in place. As a result, pupils with weaknesses in their phonics knowledge are not receiving the precise support they need to help them improve quickly enough. Leaders need to ensure that staff are trained and have a strong phonics programme in place for any pupils who need this.
- The primary curriculum is not planned well enough or with the detail needed to help build pupils' knowledge and skills, particularly in the foundation subjects. This limits pupils' understanding at times in their wider achievement or academic development. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is well planned and sequenced to build pupils' knowledge well over time.
- Some middle or senior leaders lack clarity about what they need to do to improve their subjects or areas of responsibility. The head of centre has not communicated his vision for reading or parts of the curriculum well enough. This has led to some weaknesses in the quality of education. Senior leaders and the proprietor need to assure themselves that other leaders fully understand their role in implementing robust improvement plans.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

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School details

Unique reference number	135405
DfE registration number	908/6096
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10107538
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Taliesin Education Limited
Chair	Alice Morris
Headteacher	Barry Coppins
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,000
Telephone number	01579 342520
Website	www.tpluscentres.co.uk
Email address	barry.coppins@tpluscentres.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–23 March 2018

Information about this school

- The T-Plus Centre is an independent special school. It specialises in supporting vulnerable pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school caters for pupils between the ages of seven and 16. There are currently nine pupils on the school's roll.
- Most pupils arrive having been excluded from other settings.
- Currently, all pupils have an EHC plan. Two local authorities, Cornwall and Bristol, fund their places.
- The school uses alternative provision to provide some specialist education, training and opportunities for the pupils. Currently, these include Transferable Skills Training (TST), Callington and 'Livewire', which helps pupils with bespoke musical interests.
- The school maintains regular contact with social services and the placing authorities. Since the previous inspection, Cornwall local authority has completed two monitoring visits to check on the school's progress.
- The previous standard inspection was carried out in March 2018. This evaluated the school to be inadequate. The school's safeguarding arrangements were judged to be effective.
- A progress monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2019. This concluded that the school was meeting all of the independent school standards.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first standard inspection carried out since the school was judged to be inadequate in March 2018.
- The inspection focused on the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE. Inspectors spoke with leaders, staff and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- During the inspection, we worked with the head of centre and met with a range of leaders and teachers. These included the English, mathematics and science leader, outdoors education and curriculum leaders.

- We conducted visits to see lessons, including off-site at Cardinham Woods for outdoor education, and met with the pupils. We also heard some pupils read and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- We also met with staff to evaluate their workload and how they are being supported by senior leaders and the proprietor.
- We also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the single central record. Further evaluations were made of the implementation of health and safety policies, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These were also checked during an inspection of the site and premises.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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